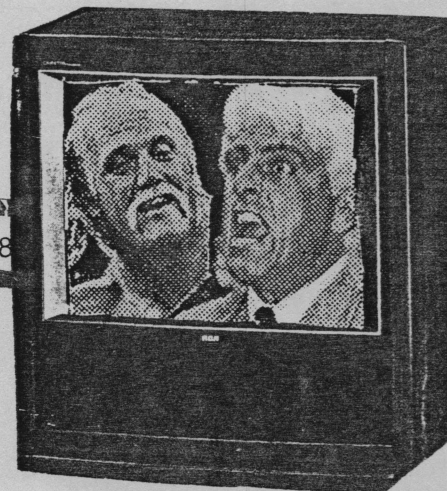


MATWATCH

213 Pine Hills Ave. Auburn Al 36830

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!



DEC. 25-JAN. 7 HOLIDAY DOUBLE ISSUE VOL. 2, NOS. 27-28

1990:

WHICH WAY THE MAT?

We trust your holiday season has already been filled with the joy of reuniting with family, friends and people who are closest to you. Whether you celebrate Christmas, Hannukah or simply a season of peace, we at MATWATCH hope that as you enter a new year, it may be filled with the best you could possibly desire.

This is our second annual Christmas/New Year double issue, which we established last year to afford me a chance to enjoy a week off with my family. And since most weekly TV shows will be offering yearenders in the next two weeks, we feel it's an adequate time to do so. Next year, we'll offer two other double issues: the third anniversary edition, which should publish some time around the Fourth of July, and one over the Labor Day holiday period. So, if your subscription ends at either the end of this week or next, send your renewals in by January 7. And remember, we WON'T mail an edition next week.

We're quite reluctant to make major predictions of what a new decade will mean to a genre of entertainment which has encountered more change and upheaval in the past six years than ever in its past. Though we'll try to play forecaster in the 1989 edition of the MATWATCH ANNUAL: THE DECADE THAT CHANGED IT ALL, we would feel it a safe analysis that change will happen even more dramatically in the first third of the 1990s. Much hinges on how successful the Turner Broadcasting organization is in revitalizing a struggling NWA in its second year and how it has learned the unique nuances of the wrestling business. Where the WWF will find its biggest challenge is in keeping its audience from growing stale from the extraordinary numbers of performers being chewed up from extensive national exposure. And if Hulk Hogan finally decides to hang it up, who fits the big boot as the central star?

Some of you, as readers have offered questions in the last two weeks as to where the business is going---and without giving away specifics we'll deal with in the annual, we'll attempt to make some educated replies to your topics of interest.

Also inside this special edition: my personal votes for the BEST and WORST of the MATWATCH TV AWARDS, for which balloting is now being tabulated. In my weekly column, we'll offer an analysis of five months of Ric Flair as chief booker of the NWA---one perspective on the report card. We also present two full pages of your letters to YOU SAID IT!!!, which has had an increasing amount of opinion expressed on a variety of topics. We will consider going to expanded frequency of letters during 1990 but at stake is a possible increase in price if we go to a weekly 8-page bulletin. Finally, we'll take two dips into the nostalgia pool as I REMEMBER.... looks back at two angles involving some of my favorite stars of the past: Mario Galento and Klondike Bill.

This time last year, we had barely climbed over the 100 mark in subscribers to our fledgling publication but a lot of people found us over the Christmas/New Year break. I am more than grateful to report that in the past week, we mailed out a record 636 issues of MATWATCH to 45 states, England, Australia, Canada and Japan. We have tried to be sensitive to your desires in what you want in a bulletin which tries to concentrate predominantly on the TV side of pro wrestling. We will strive to continue in no less the same fashion during 1990. We have made a commitment to continue MATWATCH as a weekly newsletter at least through the next year. Where we go beyond that depends upon changes in the business, time for publication and, of course, changes in my professional and personal life. But your encouragement---and your criticism---has been the lifeblood of this publication and to you, we are particularly grateful.

From my family to yours, may you be blessed with the most abundant joys and prosperities possible within the next decade, one which we pray will be filled with peace for an entire generation and more exciting journeys into the unknown.

*Steve
Beverly*

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Vol. 2, No. 27-28 / Dec. 25 - Jan. 7

THIS WEEK'S HEADLINES

CWA COMES TO END DURING JANUARY

MEMPHIS --- MATWATCH has learned through anonymous sources that the Championship Wrestling Association will end its weekly appearances at the Mid-South Coliseum in January.

Speculated for months, the decision reportedly had been made by CWA owner Jerry Jarrett before the Dec. 11 show drew only \$3,500, a record low for Memphis.

Jarrett will fold Memphis, Nashville, Louisville and major CWA towns into monthly tours for his USWA Dallas-based promotion.

Still unclear is the future of the CWA TV show on WMC-TV in Memphis and eight syndicated markets. One source has told MATWATCH Jarrett's WMC contract calls for a show to be specifically produced for the NBC affiliate. Whether a USWA show would be accepted by WMC is uncertain. But key insiders have told personnel of at least two CWA TV outlets the syndicated show will be gone by January.

GILBERT, MANSON INJURED; RECUPERATION UNKNOWN

DETROIT --- NWA wrestlers Eddie Gilbert and Cactus Jack Manson are both recuperating from separate injuries suffered in both in-ring and out-of-ring incidents.

Gilbert incurred a severely sprained ankle in his opening match with Kevin Sullivan at the Cobo Arena card in Detroit Dec. 17. Originally thought to have suffered a break, Gilbert was rushed to Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit for treatment. Doctors are uncertain on his recovery period.

In a separate accident, Manson was injured in an auto accident near his home in Comestwague, N.Y. His car was allegedly hit by another vehicle and Manson suffered facial contusions and lacerations.

Reportedly, more than 120 stitches were needed to close Manson's cuts. The injuries are expected to delay Manson's scheduled Jan. 16 NWA full-time start.

PEDICINO, BLACKSTONE SET TO 'WALK THE AISLE'

KENNESAW, Ga. --- Bob Eubanks or Chuck Woolery would call it a "love match." And it even involves a ring.

NWA commentator Joe Pedicino and Atlanta TV wrestling show emcee Boni Blackstone became engaged Dec. 20. The former PRO WRESTLING THIS WEEK co-hosts announced their plans prior to a WVEU-TV SUPERSTARS OF WRESTLING Christmas party in the Georgia capital. Tentative plans call for a fall 1990 wedding. Early reports that Michael Hayes will sing at the ceremony are exaggerated.

BROWN 'KIDNAPING': WAS IT A HOAX? SOME FOLKS BELIEVE SO

ATLANTA --- No report exists in the Riverdale, Ga., police department. And the mystery continues concerning the self-alleged kidnaping of Atlanta TV wrestling personality Randall Brown. But a number of insiders believe the whole story was concocted by Brown, who denies a hoax.

Last week's MATWATCH included a report on the charges made by Brown that he was abducted, beaten, bound and kidnaped after the Dec. 10 SLAM-O-RAMA wrestling show at the Cobb County Civic Center in Marietta. Brown alleges he was held hostage for two days and deposited by a waste dump on Dec. 12. But police in Riverdale, where a complaint was said to have been filed, report no investigation.

At least three insiders close to the Southern Championship promotion believe Brown is making the claim as a publicity stunt. An anonymous caller to MATWATCH Dec. 19 said: "It's real funny that his wrists were shaved perfectly where the ropes were supposed to have burned the hair from his arms and his face was bruised---possibly carpet burns. Please spell the name right: Randall Brown."

RATINGS RAP

CABLE

Week Ending Dec. 18	Rating	Share	Total Homes
NWA WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP (TBS 12/16)	3.1	6.0	1.58 million
WWF PRIME TIME (USA 12/18)	3.0	4.4	1.46 million
WWF ALL-AMERICAN (USA 12/17)	2.8	6.7	1.36 million
NWA MAIN EVENT (TBS 12/17)	2.7	4.8	1.37 million
NWA MAIN EVENT (TBS 12/16)	0.8	6.5	464,000

SYNDICATION

Week Ending Nov. 19	Rating	Stations	Pct. U.S.
WORLD WRESTLING FEDERATION	9.8	247	97%
THE WRESTLING NETWORK (NWA)	8.8	167	92%

(ANALYSIS: WCW was on top of the heap for the fifth straight week, albeit with its lowest rating of the five. Still, the 6% share is regarded in the industry as a tremendous figure for cable leading into prime access in the Eastern half of the country. POWER HOUR was pre-empted and NWA MAIN EVENT jumped back 13% from its slippage of the previous week. ALL-AMERICAN posted its top rating since October and PRIME TIME checked in with a 3 rating for the first time in ten weeks. Ratings will probably drop off Christmas week but are expected to be high this coming weekend with so much bitter cold around the U.S. keeping viewers inside.

We're catching up on delays receiving syndication numbers. The figures for Nov. 19 weekend indicate the strength of WWF in building SURVIVOR SERIES and an inflated rating by 2.4 points for the NWA, based on the strong national numbers on cable for the CLASH.)

MATWATCH HOTLINE:
(205) 826 - RING

MATWATCH

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FLAIR AS NWA BOOKER: ARE CRITICS JUMPING THE GUN ON RIC???

Objectivity often costs more than a Care Bears gift set at Christmas when one examines the career of someone who is a personal favorite. Ric Flair is somewhat the Hawkeye Pierce of professional wrestling. After eleven years, one would have found it difficult to find any fan of M*A*S*H growing tired of the exploits of the 4077th. After a decade championing the NWA banner and the organization warhorses as myself still consider the standard of professional wrestling, Flair rarely fails to make his minutes in the ring compelling.

Yet, arguably the most controversial period of Flair's career has come in the second half of 1989 and not primarily for his on-mat exploits. Ric Flair as chief NWA booker. Paul MacArthur of Camillus NY perhaps summed things precisely with a pertinent question: have people been too quick to prejudge Flair as a booker, considering what has happened the last two months?

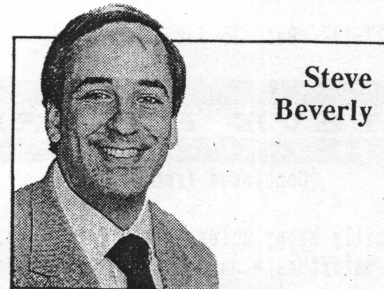
Examining bookers is like deciphering assembly instructions for a Radio Shack toy. Few of us truly understand the pressures of the contemporary booker, particularly in the NWA. When one considers six hours of first-run television per week (more than the WWF produces), corporate ownership and enormous travel demands for national promotions, I wonder why anyone in that job doesn't have to check in at a local Humana center for a recovery period.

But let's examine the Flair record since August from the standpoint of seven items by which a booker's performance should be judged within the NWA (not necessarily in order): weekly TV ratings, ratings for CLASH specials, buy-rate for pay-per-view shows, arena attendance, talent selection, ring performances and overall staff morale:

WEEKLY TV RATINGS: They're up and have been consistently so since mid-October. WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING has reclaimed the leadership spot in the Nielsens and POWER HOUR and NWA MAIN EVENT have posted increases. Syndication has had a marginal hike. A number of reasons may exist for this, including a colder fall keeping a lot of viewers inside more and a stronger set of TV "main events," but no matter what, the numbers are up and TBS programmers are pleased. Grade: A-.

CLASH SPECIALS: The last two CLASH events posted 4-plus ratings with NEW YORK KNOCKOUT registering the third-best numbers of the nine specials. The Flair-Terry I QUIT match missed by a nose of eclipsing Flair-Sting (March 1988) as the most-viewed cable match of all time. Grade: A.

PAY-PER-VIEW \$\$\$: Reports, which are entirely preliminary at this point, are that STARRCADE posted between a 1.8 and 2.0 buy-rate (according to independent sources), which would be a gross of close to \$5 million (Turner taking about \$2 million after splits). A weak HALLOWEEN HAVOC show grossed about \$3.3 million,



Steve
Beverly

which was the equal or better to two PPV events of much higher creative quality earlier in the year. While no breakthrough event has been registered to bring TBS a megabucks evening on the level of WRESTLEMANIA, pay revenues have to be considered at least acceptable because they are posting profits in that one category of WCW. Grade: B.

ARENA ATTENDANCE: It is, admittedly, unfair to lay the house woes of the NWA on Flair. This is a spiral which has wound down as slowly as watching the Eveready Energizer drummer run down. But, fact is, the company continues to criss-cross the East, South and Midwest with consistent 1,200 to 2,000 houses which continue to lose significant money. And the trend is not expected to reverse itself without a big dose of miracle medicine not even Ric may have. Grade: D.

TALENT ACQUISITIONS: Give Ric A-plus for reclaiming Arn Anderson, though he's not a franchise-maker. Give him a plus for recognizing the potential of a young comer such as Cactus Jack Manson. But Gary Hart in the top manager's role and Paul E. Dangerously out of the company? Buzz Sawyer and Kendo Nagasaki instead of Eddie Gilbert and/or Michael Hayes? Doom? Plus, an apparently fumbling effort to present Tom Zenk as Z-Man. And in reviving the concept of the Four Horsemen (and I'll be the first to stand corrected if this begins to pop houses) as babyfaces, many insiders believe another valiant attempt to revive a fading past has surfaced. In a final respect, it appears most of the new talent introduced by the Jim Ross stint in spring (except for Brian Pillman) is being either de-emphasized or eliminated, which rears the ugly charge of personality politics. Grade: C-.

RING PERFORMANCES: Judging from a combination of workrate and booking, it's not bad. Flair has continued to insist on a high workrate level, something which petered out at least six of the wrestlers during the recent STARRCADE iron tourneys. I will also cite booking of matches like Lex Luger-Tommy Rich at CLASH VIII, which had nothing going for it on paper and proved entertaining. Or the overall booking of Ironman/Ironteam which provided predominantly distinct finishes and a variety of outcomes, along with a surprise finale. And then, there was HALLOWEEN HAVOC. Oh, well, one can't have it all. Grade: B.

OVERALL STAFF MORALE: I don't know that in any wrestling organization this will be good. Wrestlers are much like TV news people: they aren't

STEVE BEVERLY

(Continued from Page 3)

typically happy unless they're unhappy. But the more unfortunate part in this case is a distinct US (wrestlers) vs. THEM (TBS management) element has developed in recent months and the in-fighting is continuing division within the NWA and an unnecessary by-product of active wrestlers running the creative end of the company. Flair and his troops have had a reportedly difficult time adapting to corporate ownership and this is not helping cohesion to increase. Grade: C-

Other elements figure into the mix: lackluster productions in syndication, elimination of new elements (i.e., NWA Top 10) which gave this group an image of innovation and an impression of trying to recapture the past (a la the Rock & Roll Express return in January), some of which can be tied to Flair, some not.

Some factions within TBS/WCW were distraught when HAVOC did a respectable money rate and the CLASH IX spec posted its big numbers because they were wanting Flair to fail. That is brutally unfair. He wanted the job as booker and he deserves his chance to prove his worth without that kind of sniping. And to be fair, three of the major elements make Flair's report card look good.

But the question mark stands in two primary areas: 1) is the thinking in the booking ranks going beyond next month or is it looking to the NWA's long-term future---booking major pay shows well in advance and developing the surrounding TV and house shows around those pay efforts? Evidence remains that it is not, particularly when one examines the disputes over the booking of STARRCADE and the late changes made. 2) should the world heavyweight champion of any organization be the chief steward of its creative direction. Taking a firm stand, I say no, doing a complete about face from my 1988 endorsement of a Flair bookership. It wouldn't matter who the champion is. There is too much of a compromise with objectivity in dealing with fellow talent and storylines. Such is the reason why most TV news directors are no longer anchors. It's awfully tough to sit on the set and maintain morale with someone you may be having to discipline after the newscast.

A final point, however, is to be made about Flair's own dedication and work ethic, regardless of his results. Few people argue, including his internal critics, of the amount of work he has put into the job as booker. One NWA insider recently said, "I've seen few people work as hard as Ric on this job. Take a recent show for TV. Ric went out and worked hard in two matches for at least 35 minutes that night. In between, he was having to deal with all of the personnel problems, the lineup, some people who didn't show, the whole nine yards. I don't know how anybody could hold up under the strain."

One can see the strain the past five months have put on Flair by looking into his face during his TV interviews. Compare the Ric Flair you see on tape from your January spots during the Steamboat return with the closeups you see of the 39-year-old champion today. The lines in his face and eye strain have brought on an aging factor similar to

what happened to Desi Arnaz over the years of I LOVE LUCY. And this is a man still giving perhaps nightly the strongest ring performances in this country.

Many people have speculated that Flair would have a difficult time continuing in WCW if he'd had a taste of booking and had to step down. I honestly can't answer that question. I'm not on Ric's after-dinner list, as are few newsletter editors. But I think that prospect would best be evaluated by two situations: 1) if THE NEW YORK TIMES estimates of Flair's salary at \$800,000 a year are accurate, is that not a whopping amount to abandon? and 2) while a Hogan-Flair series would be one of the few confrontations I could see selling out every arena in the U.S. today, would Flair's pride allow him to be the loser around the horn as he almost surely would be in a Vince McMahon-produced program---and could he live with washing away, work or not, the reputation of being the top man with discerning fans over a full decade of battle with a better-showcased rival, when the lasting image would be that Ric Flair could not defeat Hulk Hogan? Only Ric could answer those questions.

I return to a comment I made in a controversial open letter to Flair in August, which I've been told was not well received but was an honest plea reflecting the thoughts of many, many people who have admired Flair for 15 years: I don't know why Ric wanted this job. I respect his courage and willingness to take it. But he didn't need it. He has accomplished virtually everything one has to gain in this genre and I suppose he felt he had something to prove to Jim Crockett and Dusty Rhodes that he was capable of better handling it. Has he? Only you can be the judge by your TV viewing and your ticket purchases. In one respect, he has done well; in the other, momentum is not building.

A former president of CBS, Jack Schneider, once wrote his successor: "Command is a lonely vigil." Indeed, it is. I've been a television news director, overseeing the work of as many as 37 people at a time---people who battle for exposure, who want bigger stories, who need personalized attention, who want more money, people who think you're a terrible person if you don't meet their needs yesterday---and trying to discern the desires of oft-fickle viewers who will abandon you at the drop of a tape glitch. Ric Flair continues to have a frosty taste of command at the level he's never had in his career. The first half of 1990 may indeed determine the epitaph of that chapter.

ONE YEAR AGO IN MATWATCH...

---Ric Flair defeats Lex Luger in controversial finish at STARRCADE '88 in Norfolk VA.

---Eddie Gilbert tells Jim Cornette on WCW: "If you & me went over all the bad things we'd done, we'd be here all night."

---Cactus Jack Foley becomes C.J. Manson on CWA.

---WCW posts a 2.9 in cable ratings. PTW follows at 2.7, NME at 2.3. ALL-AMERICAN is pre-empted on Christmas Day.

---Tom Prichard turns heel on CWF and Ken Wayne no-shows a lot of shows and departs Continental.

Ask Steve

**ANSWERS FOR 1990: FUTURE OF NWA,
PAUL E., WWF TALENT, MATWATCH**

In our Fourth of July double issue, we took time to answer key questions about issues in the wrestling industry you submitted. Admittedly, our analysis is strictly a one-man's-opinion perspective and much of it is based on conditions as they currently are, which likely they won't be in six months. But we thank those of you who took the time to drop us your queries as we look into an oft-clouded crystal ball:

WHAT ARE THE CHANCES OF PAUL E. DANGEROUSLY'S PLAN TO GROUP TOGETHER SEVERAL INDEPENDENT PROMOTIONS SUCCEEDING? (Ralph Jackson, Norfolk VA; Bob Abercrombie, Anniston AL)

I'll answer in two perspectives: 1) assuming Eddie Gilbert will be part of this promotion after his NWA contract expires in March, which has not been publicly confirmed, and 2) the business realities. Paul E. is headstrong and, at times, his youth and mouth get him into trouble but he is one of the greatest young students of the business and his instincts are often uncanny. And he has the knack for creating heat where the temperature has a wind chill of 5-below. If Eddie does join with him in the effort, you can assure yourself it will not be dull and you'll see characterizations which will make you want to watch. As former wrestling executive David Woods told me recently, "I could sit in on a meeting with Eddie and watch him talk about a new character and in 15 minutes, he'd have it coming to life." Plus, with so many promotions drying up, there is more than an adequate supply of wrestlers from which to attract.

Business-wise, I'm still fuzzy on where the money will come. I've been told plans are to work with promoter Rob Russen on "sold shows," where an event is literally sold to a fundraising group to build in expenses and profits and the promotion is literally then up to the charity. It doesn't make big money but it is profitable. I've further heard of selling some of the 150 hours of in-can CWF shows to foreign distributors. And a stock option plan. All of which can generate revenue but cannot sustain a promotion forever. Plus, the clearing of TV time is more difficult than ever because wrestling is not a "phenomenon" to station operators now and a good hour on a bad station is often as negative as a bad time slot on a strong VHF. Finally, the prospect of unifying CWF, what's left of Memphis, ICW, NWF and perhaps PWF is an extraordinary gamble. Remember the fate of PRO WRESTLING U.S.A., which was an effort to combine twice the quality of talent as Vince McMahon originally had in 1984?

Having said this, I would never underestimate the ability of Dangerously and, if involved, Gilbert to pull this off because they're just "crazy" enough to make it happen. But realistically, and both of them know this, the odds are against long-term success in today's marketplace. However, I'd be greatly rooting for them.

WHY DO YOU THINK THE NWA HAS BEEN UNABLE TO REGENERATE INTEREST IN THEIR ARENA SHOWS? (Johnny Tschuta, Providence RI)

From my perspective, two key reasons: 1) weakness in syndication and 2) broader sophistication of today's wrestling fans. And the latter is, I feel, having a strong effect on crowds at WWF shows as well. First, WCW does not seem to have settled on a precise philosophy of getting local cards over in syndication. It takes more than just mentioning a town time after time. People no longer show up just because the guys are in town. The issues have to be personalized more intensely on syndicated shows because the TBS cable shows do not sell a lot tickets outside Atlanta. A move involving Terry Funk (see MATWATCHINGS, Page 7) may be a key to improving this aspect of the promotion.

But an even more lasting reason which I feel has longer-term impact is fans have become far more sophisticated to the mechanics of wrestling in the modern day. After six years of national exposure and repeated media scrutiny, only the most naive fan cannot have figured this thing out: they won't see titles change hands or storyline-altering angles

unless the cameras are present, it's a CLASH special or if it isn't pay-per-view or an overly-hyped episode of a weekly series. This simply isn't the "toothless wonder" audience of yesteryear. This sophistication is turning wrestling more into a pay-TV and advertising business. Ultimately, I think the NWA is going to have to switch to a 3-4 night a week arena company. Think of the money to be saved in transportation and arena rents alone. As for salaries, if the guys are commercial enough, so what if they're not wrestling 300 nights? The guys will be fresher and their attitudes much better.

ON THE OLD WORLD CLASS PROMOTION: DID FRITZ (VON ERICH) OWN IT? WHY DID THEY SELL OFF? WHO WAS THE BOOKER? ARE THE VON ERICHS FAMILY OR JUST PART OF THE SHOW? WHAT ARE KEVIN'S PROBLEMS? (Joe Pszonek, Sparta NJ)

Fritz Von Erich was originally majority owner and gradually transferred controlling interest to his sons. At one point, Ken Mantell held part interest when he was tried to revive the group in 1988. Jerry Jarrett assumed control last year when he was given full authority to dispense of any and all personnel, including Kerry and Kevin, if necessary. The family sold, first, because business was unprofitable, even with ad revenues from TV syndication, and---according to reports---Kevin and Kerry were terrible business managers.

As for bookers, the group has had assorted ones: Fritz did some himself, Mantell, Michael Hayes, Skandor Akbar, George Scott, Gary Hart, Eric Embry, and Robert Fuller.

The Von Erichs, for the most part, have indeed been family (real name Adkisson) but Lance Von Erich was not a relative but a created character. Kevin, to be specific, has had assorted financial and personal problems, some of which we've never been able to directly confirm but insider reports are that they are of the medical variety.

WHY IS IT THAT WE SEEM TO TIRE OF TALENT IN THE WWF, IN PARTICULAR, AND THE NWA SOONER THAN WE USED TO? (Robert Cordolono, Salem MA)

Robert, in a word: overexposure. It's that way in almost any entertainment medium today because our attention spans grow shorter and once characters begin to grow stale in our environment, it's hard to regenerate interest. It's why TV shows don't last 23 years like THE ED SULLIVAN SHOW or 20 years like GUNSMOKE. TV is no longer a novelty people will watch forever regardless of what's offered. Same is true with wrestling. Before 1984, when TV wrestling was mostly limited to a local territory, a wrestler could go to another promotion when his welcome expired. Then, he could come back a year or two later and seem fresh. But with exposure in most markets to key organizations---and with tape trading networks among hardcores, the old "familiarity breeds contempt" cliché lives.

The smartest thing the WWF does to keep Hulk Hogan fresh is keeping him out of the TV ring except for SNME and PPV specials. You get a pinch of a Hogan interview but not enough to overexpose him. Randy Savage's TV ring schedule is extremely limited, as well. In my view, the NWA should do the same with Lex Luger and Sting. It's a comparable philosophy to that of the late entertainer Liberace in the '50s and '60s. In the 1950s, Liberace had a syndicated TV series which brought him great popularity. But in 1959, at the height of his TV popularity, he canceled himself and limited himself to Las Vegas appearances and rare TV guest shots for 10 years. Why? He was quoted as saying, "I feel the need to create a demand for myself." Elvis Presley's manager, Col. Tom Parker, did the same for the King in the '60s, which kept him a larger-than-life act. So it goes with nationally-exposed wrestlers of today and unless the steam finally wisps away, the career strength of quality wrestlers will probably continue to be 2-4 years at a peak.

WHEN DID YOU DECIDE YOU WANTED TO BE A WRITER? (Melissa Millard, Battle Creek MI) WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF MATWATCH? (Various)

Melissa, I actually knew I wanted to be a broadcaster (which is my primary career) from the age of 4, when I idolized Garry Moore, Hal March, Bill Cullen, Ralph Edwards and all of the initial TV generation of game show hosts (I later hosted two local game shows, so I guess I've pulled my time in my favorite genre of all). But I knew I would do something associated with writing when I entered high school and I came under the direction of Elaine Thomas, one of the best high school journalism teachers ever (and to be brutally sexist, THE best-looking of all time). She was a great motivator and didn't hesitate to zing your work with the healthy criticism you need to improve. In other words, she didn't tell you your work was good just because she knew you.

While in college, I worked as a sportswriter for three years for a local daily paper and covered a lot of key events and when you enter a business as complex as television news, you have to know how to write, or you die.

As for MATWATCH itself, I am committed to continuing the publication through 1990 and will endeavor to improve it in whatever way I can afford. Hopefully, our conversion to a

new computer process has enhanced the look of MATWATCH. We will continue to be sensitive to your wishes and I will endeavor to follow the requests of a majority of our readers. I am a strong advocate of this being a family paper. At least a fourth of my readership is under 18. Even if that wasn't the case, I am not going to produce a publication of which anyone should be embarrassed at its content. And my thanks for all of your letters.

I REMEMBER...

MARIO GALENTO VS. THE MEDICS

When once I wrote that Mario Galento could have fared well in the wrestling environment of today, it's because he made his character have three dimensions: he was a street-fighter from New York with a po' boy Southern edge. Plus, he was one of the great brawlers of the 1950s and '60s.

I had only been a fan about six months and Mario had already become legend in my mind for his battles with J.C. Dykes and the dreaded Infernos. But Georgia wrestling circa 1965 had two masked teams battling for supremacy and Mario was the policeman against both.

The Medics had already spent time dominating the scene in Florida and traveled between the Sunshine State, Georgia and the Carolinas as the NWA world tag team champions. Later unmasked as brothers Steve & Jack Arnold from Memphis, the Medics supposedly had been pre-med students and knew unique ways to apply pain to pressure points in the body.

Mario knew little pain other than the kind he could dish out. One Saturday evening, he was in one of his classic showclosing interviews with Ed Capral, discussing the prospects of facing a new import, the Butcher (Vachon). Suddenly, the heels in white emerged, attacked Mario from behind and sent him through the dressing room door.

Telling Ed they'd been denied proper time after their match to discuss the Infernos, the Medics began decrying every team in Georgia when 90 seconds later, Galento rushed to the desk, swinging an ax-handle (probably borrowed from Lester Maddox). Badly out of breath, the 51-year-old Galento informed Capral he had not forgotten the evil ways Mario practiced in his feud with Buddy Fuller in 1963.

"My name's Butch, too, and if this Butcher thinks he can come in here and..." Mario was exclaiming when...BAM...the Medics bashed Galento in the head with a stethoscope, tied him up with a microphone cord and again sent him crashing through the door. The audience for Atlanta's BIG TIME WRESTLING was ready to emerge from their seats.

Capral then warned the Medics if there was one more incident on the set, they'd be suspended by promoter Paul Jones. No worry, they just called Jones an idiot. At that point came the one angle that tops a plastic bag for sheer lunacy and shock value. Mario came flying out of the dressing room with a double-barrel shotgun (hopefully unloaded) and told Capral, who was dashing back himself, that there was "only one way to settle something and that's just like we did it in the hills of Tennessee." The Medics went scurrying fast.

Two weeks later, the Medics lost a loser-leave town match to the Infernos, which also cost them the world tag team championship. But at the age of 12, I kept wondering if the Medics didn't have in the back of their minds that Mario may show up with that shotgun. Nah, no way. He wanted to use it on J.C. Dykes too badly.

KLONDIKE BILL VS. MISSOURI MAULER

In my graduate dissertation, I tell of the day I became hooked on pro wrestling in 1965 when Klondike Bill, who's now a ring attendant and production assistant for WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING, had a rock broken over his chest by Florida wrestler Ronnie Etchinson.

Two weeks later, the 340-pound Klondike was performing another "feat of strength." He volunteered to get into the ring and let any wrestler jump from the top rope onto his chest. While Gordon Solie was doing his mid-'60s best to talk Bill out of it, the "Alaskan" paraded to the ring and two jobbers promptly took the leap into faith and Klondike arose unscathed.

But this, my third view of pro wrestling, introduced me to the very real world of bad people. A third wrestler, with a rather rugged countenance, showed up and demanded to have a shot off the top. This guy just didn't seem nice at all. His name was Larry "Rocky" Hamilton, known better in ring quarters as The Missouri Mauler.

The classic "wait a minute!..." of Solie came into vogue here as the Mauler leaped from the top and promptly pounced onto the throat of Bill. Gordon proclaimed, "KLONDIKE BILL IS HEMORRHAGING FROM THE WINDPIPE REGION!" As Hamilton readied a second climb to the top, Bill "Haystacks" Calhoun ambled into the Tampa Sportatorium and quickly chased the Mauler into safer quarters.

The angle set up a feud which continued around the Southeast for more than a year. The Mauler shortcircuited Bill's bid for the Southern heavyweight title in Florida but Bill gained his revenge in Georgia and the Carolinas. It was a small microcosm of that day's pro wrestling picture. But it was the day I was introduced into the world of distinct good vs. evil in the ring.

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SIMPLE-MINDED PRODUCER: By the time you read this, sources say Terry Funk will probably have been named executive producer of syndication for the NWA shows. Funk will oversee content for both NWA PRO and WORLD WIDE and a number of TBS insiders are applauding the move.

MEETING IN KNOXVILLE: Another booking meeting was held Tuesday in Knoxville and Jim Herd told us before Christmas he would continue to fine-tune responsibilities on the committee. Herd would not go beyond that.

A NEW ANGLE?: How about this? Take Ricky Santana, change his hairstyle, put him in fatigues & call him Santiago Moriega, a heel coming to get revenge for his uncle. It isn't in the best of taste with American lives still being lost in Panama but could it work?

KONAN'S DILEMMA: The much-touted Konan's stint in Stampede is over and the matches between him and Owen Hart never came off. Instead, he was used as a babyface and his final week in, gained pinfalls over Johnny Smith, Archangel (Curtis Thompson) and Destruction.

MORE STAMPEDE: Part of the problem, we're told is that inside bickering is going on between the Harts and a number of guys are having trouble getting paid. Mando Guerro did not his December Stampede dates for that reason.

ICW UPDATE: The ICW taping in Meriden CT on the 16th was called by MATWATCHer Dan Reilly a show which contained the "worst match" (midgits) of all time and the "worst 15-man battle royal of all time." About 400 showed.

MORE ICW: Still unclear is whether Paul E. Dangerously was booking that taping. We'd been told the differences he'd had with the Savoldis the night before had been settled. But insiders there say Paul was not in sight and I haven't been able to confirm anything. This is one group set to be part of Paul's consortium. Dennis Condrey & Doug Gilbert, scheduled in, did not show but Condrey's father died. Bob Orton, featured on the program cover, also no-showed. Tom Prichard was there, doing his Roddy Piper impression to a tee. And he was one Paul E. had recruited.

LATEST LUCHA: Sad talk is that Red Bastien is having money woes with his West Coast LUCHA LIBRE shows and may not be able to continue beyond the next 2 weeks of TV shows. Just as it's become a popular tape trading item.

HOLLYWOOD HEAVIES: Broadway Danny Wolf and Dan Farren are having to delay their planned January premiere of HOLLYWOOD HEAVYWEIGHT WRESTLING. Building problems exist. Negotiations are underway with HOLLYWOOD LIVE, a club across from Mann's Chinese Theatre, for Feb. 18, a day after the annual CAULIFLOWER ALLEY CLUB Hall of Fame ceremonies.

ALLEY HONOREES: Announced for this year's Cauliflower event are Shohei Baba, The Destroyer, John Tolos and Capt. Leslie Holm.

AWA DATES: By the way, the AWA has returned to the 4 p.m. weekday slot on ESPN on weeks it doesn't air on Saturdays. Verne's guys were on last Monday and Tuesday and

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air this Thursday (12/28) at 4 (EST). Not sure about New Year's week.

NO LYIN', BRIAN: Brian Pillman guested on Bob Trumpy's Cincinnati radio show on WLW Wednesday night. A number of current and former Bengals were on the show and Cris Collinsworth had a choice comment about Dusty Rhodes (see LINES OF THE WEEK). But when Pillman was asked directly about what Rhodes was like, he excoriated Dusty and called him "an embarrassment to the business."

LONG-TERM: Robert Fuller & Brian Lee's win of the USWA tag belts in syndication this weekend launches a long reign with the titles, so we're told. Not an unlikely prospect with Fuller reportedly booking.

WRESTLE WAR: The price of WRESTLE WAR '90: WILD THING is listed at \$14.95 for early buyers. The Feb. 26 show, almost certainly to be headed by Flair vs. Luger, will have a 7 p.m. (EST) start time from Greensboro.

NO HOLDS: The Hogan/Beefcake cage match win over Zeus & Randy Savage on PPV Wednesday has to, in my mind, finish Tiny Lister as a contender. Speculation continues rampant as to what the WRESTLEMANIA topline will be and, even if it doesn't come off, a lot of people seem to want to see a mixed tag match with Liz involved. Seems there would be a lot more money in that, even if Liz did no more than stand in the corner, than Hogan vs. anybody other than Flair.

GIVE ME 'TIL THE NEXT ONE: One apology to you all: I promised to give you my votes for the MATWATCH TV AWARDS in this issue. Unfortunately, a personal emergency came up and I did not have time to include it. It will form the basis of my first column in the new year.

PWF STATUS: One reason PWF was pulled from its syndie stations is its audience was not high enough to register even one rating point. The Florida group will have no success selling shows on community access cable but will try to hang onto its Sunshine Network slot on either Wednesday or Thursday nights. ICW & CNF continue on Sunshine.

CLOSING NOTE: I'll be impossible to reach until probably Jan. 2. But if you have news or info, please leave it on my answering machine (205) 826-RING. We'll be at the Hall of Fame Bowl in Tampa Friday through Monday.

MATWATCH ANNUAL

We'll take orders until Jan. 7 for the MATWATCH ANNUAL: THE DECADE THAT CHANGED IT ALL, then we'll announce a second order date to determine interest for additional copies. The price is \$10 for U.S./Canada subscribers and \$18 overseas.

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SCALE: PINFALL! - Must See. PILEDRIVER - Excellent. POWERSLAM - Good. DRAW - Average. RESTHOLD - Fair. BOMB - Poor. PLUS - Midscale rating.

(PORTLAND/2 Wks. Ago) - Carl Stiles d. Jonathan Holliday but Veronica hits Stiles w. loaded boot & Holliday puts dress & lipstick on Stiles; Bill Francis d. Beetlejuice when Holliday shakes ropes & causes BJ to fall. Francis refuses win; Steve Doll d. Al Madril by DQ; Rex King d. Jonathan Boyd; Billy Jack Haynes/Jeff Warner d. Grappler/Brian Adams by DQ when Holliday hits Warner w. boot & Haynes is doubleteamed before Rip Oliver makes save. ANGLES: 1) Scotty proposes to Ginger. She accepts & Scotty wants wedding in ring on TV. Ginger wants Doll as best man. Veronica is in tears; 2) HOT LEGS CONTEST: Veronica struts but Scotty puts blanket over Ginger, withdrawing her. POWERSLAM. [Last Week]: Holliday d. Stiles when Madril hits Carl w. object & the dress & powder go on Stiles again; Doll d. Scotty by DQ when Veronica hits Steve w. purse & then hits Ginger with it. Scotty then piledrives Doll from top rope; Haynes/Oliver no contest vs. Grappler/Adams; Beetlejuice d. Madril by DQ; AUSTRALIAN DEATH MATCH: King vs. Boyd in progress as show ends. ANGLE: Everyone comes out for wedding & Scotty says he'd be dumber than Stiles to marry "a bimbo" like Ginger. He leaves w. Veronica. POWERSLAM.

(SCW) - Nightmare Ted Allen d. Bobby Bennett; Greg "Rebel, Not Dingdong" Evans d. Billy White; (From Slam-O-Rama) CAGE: Bullet/Brad Armstrong d. Mr. Atlanta/Randy Rose & after, Joel Deaton "injuries" Rose; Deaton vs. Chic Donovan ends in melee. RESTHOLD.

(USWA) - [USWA TAG SEMIFINALS]: Robert Fuller/Brian Lee d. Dustin Rhodes/J.J. Funk; Jeff Jarrett/Matt Borne d. B.J. Travis/Gary Young; [CHAMPIONSHIP]: Fuller/Lee d. Jarrett/Borne. DRAW-PLUS.

(CWA) - Ricky & Todd Morton d. Keith Eric/Larry Fontana; FEATURE: "Misdeeds of Billy Travis"; Master of Pain/Soul-taker d. Chris Allen/Chris Tarkin; Chris Champion d. Keith Roberson; VIDEO: Dustin Rhodes; Billion \$ Babies double countout vs. Bill Dundee/The Cobra. RESTHOLD.

(ICW) - Phil Apollo d. Sonny Blaze; Robbie Ellis d. Pink Assassin; Mr. Pogo d. Bill Tiger; Vic Steamboat d. Chris Michaels; Undertakers d. Ray Oddysey/Eric Sapracea by DQ; Tom Prichard d. Borancano. BOMB-PLUS.

(LUCHA LIBRE/W.I.N.) - Konan/Ray Misterio double DQ vs. Black Gordman/Ari Romero. Match ends in pullapart after Konan & Gordman remove each others' masks and put on the opponent's mask; Eddie & Mando Guererro d. KKK; Superboy/Relampajo d. Carlos Vega/Principe Indu. POWERSLAM-PLUS.

(AWA/ESPN) - [Monday 4 P.M.]: (AWA WORLD TITLE) Nikita Koloff d. Larry Zbyszko by DQ but Larry retains belt; 6-MAN: New Fantastics/Jerry Blackwell d. Destruction Crew/Johnny Valiant. RESTHOLD.

[Tuesday 4 P.M.]: Akio Sato/Pat Tanaka double DQ vs. Paul Diamond/The Trooper; Tommy Jammer d. Chris Curtis. BOMB-PLUS.

[NOTE: AWA to air Thursday (12/28) at 4 p.m. on ESPN.]

(NWA/SYND.) - [NWA PRO]:

Wild Samoans d. Larry Santo/Rick Ryder; Tom Zenk d. Nasty Ned Brady; Dynamic Dudes d. Bob Cook/Joe Cruz; WORLD TAG TITLE: Steiners d.

Freebirds by reverse decision when WOMAN tosses shoe to Michael Hayes, who uses it on Scott. But Norman makes a Polaroid of the incident, shows it to Nick Patrick who changes the decision. PEDICINO'S NOSE: Updates on Luger, Sting. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

[WORLD WIDE]: Ole & Arn Anderson d. State Patrol; Wild Samoans d. Paul Drake/Rick Fargo; Kevin Sullivan d. Sean Royal; 6-MAN: Steiners/Norman d. Danny Spivey/DOOM. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

(NWA/TBS) - [POWER HOUR]: Ranger Ross d. Agent Steel; Eddie Gilbert/Tommy Rich d. Dragonmaster/Buzz Sawyer by DQ when Buzz throws Nick Patrick over top & the two beat up on Eddie until Andersons save; Arn Anderson d. Mike Rotunda; WNN: Gordon Solie announces Tatsumi Fujinami and Jumbo Tsuruta have signed for NWA title matches in January; FUNK'S GRILL: Norman tells Terry he's painting something for WOMAN: a house. DRAW.

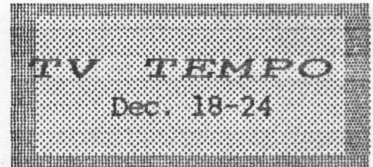
[WCW]: Midnight Express d. New Fantastics; Andersons d. State Patrol; DOOMED d. Ryder/Drake; Rich double COR vs. Rotunda; Kendall Windham d. Lee Scott; Terminator d. Steel; Ross/Gilbert d. Galaxians; U.S. TITLE: Sting d. Luger by DQ when Lex chairs Sting on Stinger splash, then the Horsemen & J-Tex run in for 8-man brawl; N.Z. Militia d. Mike Thor/Regal; Zenk/Brian Pillman d. Brady/Cook but Freebirds hit ring after and match starts which will be shown next week. ANGLE: Jim Cornette unwittingly signs contract to meet Shane Douglas in ANYTHING GOES match next week. DRAW-PLUS. [MAIN EVENT]: Dudes d. Militia; Gilbert d. Italian Stallion; LUMBERJACK MATCH: Rich vs. Rotunda ends in brawl. DRAW.

(WWF/USA) - [PRIME TIME]: Haku d. Paul Roma; Roddy Piper d. Tom Stone; Dino Bravo d. Randy Fox; Ronnie Garvin d. Spike Jones; Rockers d. Brooklyn Brawler/Dave Wolfe; Curt Hennig d. Jimmy Snuka; Jake Roberts d. Craig Green; BRO. LOU w. Randy Savage/Zeus/Sherri; Ted DiBiase d. Scott Colton; Hart Foundation d. Rougeaus. ANGLE: Piper beats Bobby Heenan in trivia contest, so Bobby has to show up as Santa Claus next week or face \$25,000 fine. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

(WWF/SYND.) - [CHALLENGE]: Rockers d. Tom Burton/Larry Lawson; Bravo d. Fox; Terry Taylor d. Barry Horowitz; Hennig d. Reno Riggins; Bret Hart d. Wolfe; Roberts d. Green; Bolsheviks d. W.T. Jones/Todd Becker. BOMB-PLUS. [SUPERSTARS]: Ultimate Warrior d. Brian Costello; UPDATE: PPV Preview; Colossal Connection d. Curt Todd/Frankie De Falco; Bad News Brown d. James Sexton; Jim Duggan d. Conquistador I; Rick Martel d. Warren Bianchi; BRO. LOU w. Hulk Hogan/Brutus Beefcake; REPLAY: Rockers dropkick Fuji; Powers of Pain d. Fox/Lawson; SEGMENT: Dusty Rhodes introduces Sapphire as new manager; Garvin d. Jones. RESTHOLD.

LINES OF THE WEEK

1. Cris Collinsworth, WLW Radio: "I hear the biggest thing in wrestling is Dusty Rhodes' Christmas party."
2. Don Coss, PORTLAND, on Scotty-Ginger wedding: "It may turn out to be headlock instead of wedlock."
3. Gorilla Monsoon & Sean Mooney, PTW: (GM) "Sean Mooney's a guy who's never



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been caught doing anything, with the elves or anyone else." (SM) "Obviously, Gorilla, you've never talked to Sister Mary Patrice." 4. Jim Cornette, PH, to Jim Ross: "It's tit for tat, Jim. You know plenty about that." 5. Ross & Cornette, PH: (JR) "You're telling a lie, Corny. Your nose is growing." (JC) "The biggest nose around the NWA is JOE PEDICINO'S NOSE." 6. Cornette, PH: "The only way a chin can hurt you is if you're like Joe Pedicino and have so many of them." 7. Terrence Garvin, USWA: "Lowrance, I believe your briefs are too tight. That must be why you're so crabby." 8. Marc Lowrance, USWA, to Garvin: "Our time's almost up. I wish yours was." 9. Bobby Heenan, PTW, on possible fine: "\$25,000? I don't have that kind of money. I'm tapped out!" 10. Coss, PORTLAND, on wedding: "I feel like I'm on AS THE STOMACH TURNS."

11. Ross, PH: "If a lipreader tried to read your lips, Corny, all he'd see is a blur." 12. Chris Cruise, WWW, on Buzz Sawyer: "He's built like a fireplug and just about as easy to damage." 13. Terry Funk, WWW: "You know why the Dragonmaster walks backwards? 'Cause he's all hindsight and no foresight." 14. Jesse Ventura, WWF: "After putting up with you all these years, McMahon, Santa will be very gracious to Jesse the Body." 15. Scotty the Body, PORTLAND, to Ginger: "Those flowers I gave you were from Mr. McDougall's backyard." 16. Heenan & Monsoon, PTW: (BH) "I'm no Tom Stone." (GM) "You're not Tom Jones, either." 17. Ross, WCW: "Cornette's been in more hot water than a boiled egg." 18. Ross, WCW: "Cornette's in such bad shape, he can't even jump to a conclusion." 19. Garvin, USWA: "Lowrance, you're such a contemporary guy, you probably drive a Toyota Celica." 20. Pillman, WCW: "When you jump on us, you'll think you're moonwalking on a banana peel."

21. Ventura & McMahon, WWF: (JV) "What's her name... Sapphire? Does the Kingfish know about this?" (VMc) "Who's that?" 22. Sir Samuel P. Kent, SCW: "Merry Christmas and may your grandma get run over by a reindeer." 23. Roddy Piper, WWF: "I ain't a big fan of Barney Frank's. I like the Flintstones." 24. Piper, WWF: "Some people say I can sing...like a vulture." 25. Chris Adams, USWA, on calendar: "We're offering the total package for \$14.95." (Luger sure comes cheaply, doesn't he?)

STRONGEST COMMENTS - 1. Brian Pillman, WLW Radio: "Dusty Rhodes is a total idiot and an embarrassment to the sport." 2. Scotty, PORTLAND: "No old lady of mine is going to show her stuff. She's going to be barefoot & pregnant." 3. Ventura, WWF: "Saying the Rockers can beat the Powers of Pain is like saying your alma mater Harvard can beat Miami in football, McMahon." 4. Scotty, PORTLAND: "I'd be dumber than Carl Stiles to marry a bimbo like Ginger." 5. Piper, WWF: "I don't like taking \$2.5 million to sit on the bench. Mandarin, my pride just couldn't take that."

QUESTIONS OF THE WEEK - 1. Monsoon, PTW, on Sherri: "Who does her makeup? Dracula?" 2. Ross, PH, on Rotunda: "Why does he keep going for his knee? Does he have a knee fetish?" 3. Ventura, WWF: "How does Finkel know if it's Conquistador No. 1 or 2?"

NICKNAMES OF THE WEEK - 1. BOBBY, THE RED-NOSED WEASEL (Roddy Piper on Heenan) 2. GINGER THE BODY (Don Coss on Ginger before wedding) 3. MICHAEL PMS HAYES (Pillman on Michael) 4. DIVE TO DESTRUCTION (Gordon Solie on Termini-

nator's finishing move).

BEST PICTURES - 1. TBS, Sting-Luger match. 2. WWF, Jesse Ventura as Santa Claus. 3. PTW, Hennig slapping Snuka. 4. LUCHA LIBRE, Konan/Misterio vs. Gordman/Romero brawl. 5. PORTLAND, Scotty-Ginger wedding. 6. TBS, Cornette bashing Bobby Fulton.

NOSTALGIA AWARD - Lance Russell, NWA PRO: "Norman reminds me of the Poor Soul on THE JACKIE GLEASON SHOW."

BEST AUDIO - TBS, Arn Anderson on WCW: "Some things never change," after ring entrance.

SOLIE'S DICTIONARY - "The Militia are moving with more ALACRITY than they used to."

BLOOPER AWARD - Ross, PH, in answer to Cornette's remark, "The Andersons probably spent Thanksgiving together," Ross replied, "They did---at the Omni." Funny, I didn't know SURVIVOR SERIES was at the Omni.

BOO AWARD - ESPN, for terrible job of promoting change to daytime slot for AWA. It may not be a great or even a good show but viewers deserve to know when it airs to decide.

TUBE TALK

Next week's WCW will feature Zenk/Pillman vs. Freebirds, Sting vs. Dragonmaster and Shane Douglas vs. Jim Cornette in an Anything Goes match....POWER HOUR will be at 11:05 p.m. (EST) Friday with Luger vs. Ranger Ross on top....WWF SUPERSTARS will feature a tag title match between Demolition and Andre/Haku....Say what you will but the angle where Norman took the Polaroid shot of Woman tossing her shoe to Michael Hayes was one of the more creative finishes.

The LUCHA LIBRE brawl which ended in a pullapart is already a nominee for NEXT year's BRAWL OF THE YEAR....The ATLANTA CONSTITUTION did a full-blown feature (a la NEW YORK TIMES) on Ted Turner's wrestling efforts and Chris Cruise was quoted as saying, "Who cares?" if outcomes are scripted in advance. Quoting Cruise: "Do we have to have disclaimers on movies that say the movie that you see isn't real?" Jim Herd, the WWF's Steve Planamenta and Irv Muchnick are also quoted in the two-page report in the Dec. 19 edition.

WCW aired a six-month-old episode on its network last weekend, so I don't know the status of freshened update shows....David Williamson reports North American wrestling still had a show skedded this past Tuesday in Cleveland TN with Terry Gordy vs. The Bullet & Junkyard Dog vs. Jimmy Golden on top. Their Dec. 15 show was in Athens TN, not AL....AWA's "Rage in the Cage" is on tap Jan. 13 in Rochester MN with Destruction Crew defending the AWA tag belts vs. Paul Diamond & The Trooper, Sgt. Slaughter vs. Russian Brute, Candi Divine vs. Magnificent Mimi and Col. DeBeers vs. Nord the Barbarian.

On POWER HOUR, Gordon Solie reverted to a mention of the WWF, with a line about the Piper-Heenan TV battles....One reason WOMAN did not appear with DOOM Sat. on WCW: Kevin Sullivan got into a flap with someone prior to the match, left the arena & took Nancy with him. I'm told DOOM was furious when they had to enter to Nancy's new ring music: "Great Balls of Fire"....Why did Jim & Gordon talk as if she was there?....Hope we have a great new year and a few more barriers across the world can fall. God bless! PSB.

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MATWATCH SHOPPERS NETWORK

BOOKS

SHELDON GOLDBERG, 108 Pawndale Rd., Roslindale MA 02131, is seeking to buy a copy of Dr. Gerald Morton's book, *WRESTLING TO RASSLIN'*. Jerry reads MATWATCH every week, so perhaps he can help.

CLIFF BRENNER, P.O. Box 167, Dobbs Ferry NY 10522, is looking for any books on the history of pro wrestling, both in the U.S. and abroad.

WRESTLING SCHOOLS

BORIS MALENKO WRESTLING SCHOOL has a new mailing address: Box 24451, Tampa FL 33622. The school has two rings for interested candidates: one U.S. style and another UWF Japanese-style.

TAPES

STEVE GERWECK, 530 Concetta Dr., Monroe MI 48161, is offering a set of tapes available for sale or trade. Write him for a list.

HARVEY COBB, 2619 Ruffin Way, Norfolk VA 23504, has a catalog of more than 80 tapes available. The catalog is \$1.00 each.

MEMORABILIA

JOHNNY TSCHUTA, 105 Metcalf St., Providence RI 02904, is interested in buying NWA T-shirts, tapes and other memorabilia. Johnny, write: MERCHANDISE DIRECTOR, WCW, P.O. Box 105716, Atlanta GA 30348.

PICTURES

STEVE BRYANT, who is again supplying some excellent shots for our 1989 MATWATCH ANNUAL, has an excellent selection of action and still photos from which you can choose. Write him for a list and prices: 708 Wanda Lane, Tullahoma TN 37388.

FANS GATHERING

A fans' gathering for WRESTLE WAR '90 in Greensboro, N.C., Feb. 25, is being organized. For more info: write STEVE SIMS, Suite 320, 1401 Branding Ave., Downers Grove IL 60515-1138.

YOU SAID IT!!!

I don't like to criticize people in the broadcast industry and especially one of my heroes---in particular, Jim Ross. But I feel relatively certain he knows that Jack and Jerry Brisco were the last brother team to capture the NWA world tag team belts. I don't know if that's because the Briscos work for Titan and both Ole & Gene (Anderson) work for TBS but for someone who knows the sport as well as Ross, it makes him look very erroneous.

TONY RICHARDS
LEDBETTER KY

(FSB: Tony, I have nothing to back this up and this doesn't excuse the error. But I, too, believe Jim knows his wrestling history better than that and I question if it wasn't a behind-scenes order for him to get the Andersons over. Jack & Jerry are not extraordinarily popular in NWA circles, even though Jack was offered a chance to appear with the other ex-NWA champs at the RAGIN' CAJUN CLASH back in April.

As you have said many times, it will take time for the NWA to get its fans back. As long as they make younger guys more well known and add a good amount of old-timers to keep up the interst, it will be a good mix. As for the WWF, I think they start to run out of ideas. While Hogan will probably meet Zeus in WM5 in Toronto, what is next? Feuds with the Widowmaker? Mr. Perfect? The Genius? Please, not the genius again.

DAVID MELLO
OROVILLE CA

I must admit I certainly wasn't thrilled with the Ironman/Ironteam idea but did it ever turn out great!!! Probably the best big show live I've ever seen (the booking was brilliant). It's stuff like this that makes me proud to be an NWA fan.

JEFF ZINGER
WOODSTOCK ONT

STARRCADE was a pleasant surprise, though I thought the Samoans-Doom and Steiners-Doom stunk up the place. Tonga just doesn't work like Samu. And Luger didn't look like championship material, to me, unlike his last four pay-per-view shows. But you couldn't beat the booking and you had pinfalls in nine of the 12 matches. You were right in your column when you said we pay to see conclusive finishes and we got them.

ART CARLSON
JACKSONVILLE FL

I'm sad to see the CWF about to fold. I was able to see the shows that SCORE ran and enjoyed them, for the most part. Even though I can't see Continental now, I wish something could be worked out to save it.

TERRY BAKER
WICHITA KS

(FSB: Terry, tentative plans are for CWF to be the flagship of the Paul Heyman-led indie consortium and it will be launched with a series of "BEST OF..." shows recapping the old Paul E./Gilbert CWF angles.)

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YOU SAID IT!!!

(Continued from Page 11)

I hope you're able to catch the Bob Luce/Buddy Roberts (CHICAGO CHALLENGE) wrestling they're showing out here on Ch. 66 (WGBO, Chicago). I've never seen a wrestling show this bad!!!

KEVIN THOMMES
NILES IL

(FSB: Per my column last week---A-men, brother!)

Regarding STARRCADE '89: it was well enough done but I don't think they had enough time to build it into the kind of monster show (a la WRESTLEMANIA) we've always been used to it being. I think maybe with just the Ironman, which had such an exciting finish, and some tag matches or singles that showcased some the other guys, it would have been better. Plus, I would have used the Freebirds instead of Doom.

ALLEN JONES
PORTLAND OR

How much longer are we going to have to put up with this Zeus crap? Vince may have the golden touch and I certainly wouldn't argue with his record. But this is the worst example of professionalism I've ever seen. Tiny should stick to acting. Maybe they could use him in a guest role on IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT.

MELISSA CARTER
GREEN BAY WI

Just finished watching (Bobby) Eaton and (Ric) Flair on the NWA MAIN EVENT as I'm writing this and it was very good but, gee, Ric looks more worn down each time I see him. Even so, the man NEVER disappoints.

CHRIS MARTIN
SPRINGFIELD IL

On the issue of wrestlers doing jobs and whether or not it will hurt their career: this is an interesting issue: for instance, can Mike Rotunda make a comeback after the number of losses he's suffered in recent months? If so, will a change to babyface be necessary to do it successfully? Or will he simply need a manager to help?

Really, a wrestler shouldn't lose too much face by doing a couple of jobs but because of the current structure of the NWA and WWF, for that matter, they do. After a wrestler fails to win the world title, it's all downhill. Maybe the U.S. belt or TV belt. And that's the problem: there are too few titles for the amount of talent in the NWA....In singles, there should be at least one more title, with the titleholder facing different competition up and down the horn, aside from whom they are feuding with. This allows for "upsets" and new angles for TV or simply the next house show....A wrestler need not have his career go down the tubes when he does a job as long as it's handled right and that's the tricky part. But...it can be done.

PAUL J. MacARTHUR
CAMILLUS NY

(FSB: And yet, I've heard just as many in the industry say adding more belts is like the Emmy Awards---everyone has one except for Melissa Sue Anderson. Considering how badly the value of belts has been diluted today, I'm not sure it is the answer. The debate is funny. Who knows what constitutes a wrestler being "killed?" Ric Flair himself was pinned on two pay-per-view shows, a CLASH, a WCW episode and submitted to Ricky Steamboat. How much has he been hurt?)

I know it's the way the business is going but I can't help but feel depressed when I see the CWF, Memphis, Florida and the new North American group headed for oblivion. I wholeheartedly agree that we're going to lose the best training grounds available for young talent but have the WWF and NWA thought about what they're doing to themselves when they force these small independents out of business?

GRAHAM SHELL
CLEVELAND OH

(FSB: Vince looks on the NWA as his training ground and look for the NWA to explore a sharing with Don Owen.)

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